

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-04

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OC-01 CCO-00 EB-04 L-01 INR-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 TRSE-00
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 051949

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GOB

TAGS: FT, FR, ET, SO, US, PDEV

SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI BRIEFING PAPER

REFS: A) PARIS 6303; B) ADDIS 1176

1. DEPTY. ASST. SECTY. FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS TALCOTT SEELYE
WILL BE ARRIVING PARIS MARCH 10 AND WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR
DISCUSSIONS ON DJIBOUTI WITH FRENCH OFFICIALS MARCH 11
IF EMBASSY PARIS DEEMS IT APPROPRIATE AND IF FRENCH AGREE.
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PLEASE ADVISE. WE FEEL FOLLOWING POINTS COULD USEFULLY BE
DISCUSSED.

2. AS ONE RESULT OF THE PARIS ROUNDTABLE CONFERENCE OF
DJIBOUTI POLITICAL GROUPS, PARIS HAS ANNOUNCED THE DECISION
TO HOLD DJIBOUTI'S INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM ON APRIL 24, AND
TO GRANT INDEPENDENCE ITSELF BETWEEN 20 AND 30 JUNE, "IF
SUCH IS THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE." WE WOULD BE INTERESTED

IN KNOWING WHEN AND HOW A SPECIFIC DATE WILL BE SET.

3. WE ARE INFORMED (REF A) THAT THE DJIBOUTI CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS INDICATED A DESIRE FOR A FRENCH POST-INDEPENDENCE MILITARY PRESENCE, TO WHICH THE GOF INTENDED TO RESPOND THAT THEY WERE PREPARED EITHER TO MAINTAIN THE SAME NUMBER OF TROOPS AS NOW (6,000) OR PROVIDE A SMALL NUMBER OF MILITARY INSTRUCTORS, BUT NOT TO ACCEPT AN INTERMEDIATE FIGURE OF PERHAPS 1,500. WE WOULD BE INTERESTED

IN ANY FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE TROOP QUESTION.

4. ONE GOAL OF THE CONFERENCE WAS TO BRING ABOUT A DEGREE OF POLITICAL UNITY IN THE TERRITORY. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THE DJIBOUTI DELEGATES WHO REPRESENTED THE TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT, THE LIGUE POPULAIRE AFRICAINE POUR L'INDEPENDANCE (LPAI), THE FRONT DE LIBERATION DE LA COTE DES SOMALIS (FLCS), THE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY, AND A DISSIDENT FACTION OF THE UNION NATIONALE POUR L'INDEPENDANCE (UNI) WERE "TELEGUIDED" FROM MOGADISCIO. THE MAJOR AFAR POLITICAL MOVEMENTS CONSISTING OF THE MAJORITY OF THE UNI, THE MOUVEMENT DE LIBERATION DE DJIBOUTI, AND THE MOVEMENT POPULAIRE DE LIBERATION (MPL), WERE ENCOURAGED BY ETHIOPIA TO BOYCOTT THE CONFERENCE. THE EPMG HOPES THAT THE OAU-SPONSORED CONFERENCE SCHEDULED FOR ACCRA LATE THIS MONTH WILL BETTER PROTECT ITS INTERESTS. FRENCH OFFICIALS HAVE COMPLAINED THAT ETHIOPIA IS FOLLOWING A "WORST OPTION" POLICY AND IS PREPARING THE GROUND TO DECLARE AN INDEPENDENT AFAR STATE (PRESUMABLY OUT OF FTAI TERRITORY) FOLLOWING A

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FRENCH WITHDRAWAL. THERE HAVE BEEN INDICATIONS, ON THE OTHER HAND, THAT THE ETHIOPIANS, WHILE SUSPICIOUS, ARE WILLING TO ENCOURAGE SOME AFAR COOPERATION WITH CONSERVATIVE SOMALI ELEMENTS IN THE LPAI, PRESUMABLY LEADING TO THE "GRAND COALITION" WHICH THE ETHIOPIAN ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER ADVOCATED IN HIS DISCUSSION WITH YOU (REF B). WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE FRENCH ESTIMATES OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PROSPECTS FOR POLITICAL COOPERATION IN FTAI MIGHT BE COMPROMISED BY THE ETHIOPIAN-ENGINEERED BOYCOTT OF THE CONFERENCE, OTHER ETHIOPIAN ACTIVITIES, AND THE OAU-SPONSORED CONFERENCE, AND SPECIFICALLY THE IMPLICATIONS THESE DEVELOPMENTS MIGHT HAVE FOR A POST-INDEPENDENCE FRENCH MILITARY PRESENCE.

5. HASSAN GOULED OF THE LPAI IS SPOKEN OF AS THE PRESIDENT-PRESUMPTIVE OF THE NEW REPUBLIC. AN AFAR WOULD SEEM TO BE REQUIRED AS PRIME MINISTER FOR ETHNIC BALANCE. AHMED DINI, MOGADISCIO'S FAVORITE AFAR, IS GOULED'S SECRETARY GENERAL IN THE LPAI BUT HIS SELECTION MIGHT DISQUIET ETHIOPIA EVEN FURTHER. ABDALLA KAMIL, THE PRESENT FTAI LEADER, WOULD

PRESUMABLY BE MORE ACCEPTABLE TO THE ETHIOPIANS. WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE FRENCH ESTIMATES OF THE MOST LIKELY SET OF LEADERS IN THE IMMEDIATE POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD.

6. THE POSSIBILITY OF U.S. REPRESENTATIONS IN MOSCOW IN SUPPORT OF FRENCH DEMARCHES HAS BEEN DISCUSSED BY KISSINGER AND DE GUIRANGAUD. THE NEW ADMINISTRATION HAS NOT REVIEWED THE QUESTION, BUT WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW

WHAT ROLE FRANCE BELIEVES THE SOVIETS WILL PLAY.

7. WE HAVE NOT YET COMPLETED OUR PROCEDURES FOR OPENING A POST IN DJIBOUTI. THOSE PROCEDURES ARE WELL ADVANCED. YOU MAY ASSURE GOF REPRESENTATIVES THAT WE ARE AIMING AT OPENING A CONSULAR POST PRIOR TO THE REFERENDUM AND CONFIDENTIAL

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EXPECT TO COMPLETE ARRANGEMENTS TO THAT END SOON.

8. YOU MAY INFORM APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS IF THEY RAISE THE ISSUE THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO CONSIDER SOME MODEST ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO SUPPLEMENT AID FROM FRANCE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL DONORS IF SUITABLE PROJECTS ARE PROPOSED TO US BY THE INDEPENDENT GOVERNMENT.
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